days to go

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STRONG, STABLE

NATIONAL INTERES

Conservatives

Data watchdog to investigate the targeting of voters online

Messages using Facebook data may be not be lawful Cambridge Analytica one of firms contacted by ICO

Robert Booth

News

The information commissioner has launched an investigation into the way UK political parties target voters through social media with a warning that if they send political messages to people based on their individual data, they could be breaking the law.

The investigation "into the use of data announced by Elizabeth Denham, the information commissioner, and will go further than the watchdog's exploration of practices deployed during the EU referendum campaign

Denham said: "Given the big data revocampaigns are exploring the potential of advanced data analysis tools to help win votes. The public have the right to expect that this takes place in accordance with the law as it relates to data protection and electronic marketing."

sioner's Office (ICO) met representatives of the political parties in London "to remind them that the law applies to the collection of data even [with] Facebook feeds and Twitter feeds" Denham said she believed voters

Last week the Information Commis-

accepted there would be some broad targeting of groups based on data gleaned by parties concerning age and location.

She said, however: "If political campaigns or third-party companies are able to gather up very precise digital trails to then individually target people, that is an area they are going to be offside the law."

The watchdog said it had contacted Cambridge Analytica, a New York based company that claims to be "the global leader in data-driven campaigning", which was linked to the Leave.EU pro-Brexit campaign. It has also contacted Aggregate IQ, a Canadian data analytics company that provided services to Vote Leave. Cambridge Analytica has said it has never been retained by, nor done any data directly from people, via a website, work, paid or unpaid, for Leave.EU.

understood to have set aside about £1m cannot simply choose to say nothing." each to spend on advertising directly to voters through Facebook.

On Monday the Guardian revealed how parties were sending adverts to people

through Facebook pages, sometimes subtly altering the wording or visual treatment depending on the recipients, though here is no evidence that individual voters have been getting adverts intended only for them based on their politics or any psychological profile gleaned from Facebook

"The Conservative party fully complies with all the requirements of electoral and information law," a spokesperson for the Tories said. "Digital campaigning techniques help ensure that the public are informed, and will drive up democratic participation across society." Labour did not return a request for comment.

But Denham yesterday told Radio 4's The Media Show: "We think there are a analytics for political purposes" was lot of question marks ... There have been some strong allegations about the ability of companies to work with campaigns to micro-target individuals using digital trails online to ... identify where political leanings may be, and target them in some way. We are looking at former campaigns. lution, it is understandable that political and we'll look at how political parties are using personal data in this one."



can use data analytics to 'micro-target' Denham said the investigation into

the UK's information

fears political groups

commissioner, left.

the use of data analytics by political campaigners was a high priority, intended "to uphold the rights of individuals" and the law. She had assembled a team of researchers, technologists and lawyers for the inquiry.

The ICO has circulated guidance to the political parties warning them that the complexity of techniques used for gathering voters' personal data from social media and processing it for campaigning purposes, did not excuse them from the obligation under the Data Protection Act to tell people what it was doing with the

The ICO said: "People ... may well not be aware of how other data about them can be used and combined in complex analytics. If a political organisation is collecting or from another source, it has to tell them Labour and the Conservatives are what it is going to do with the data ... It

> Denham said that given the transnational nature of data, the ICO investigation would look at how companies operating internationally deployed such practices.



ight, the SNP'



grand if you're Iranian state telly looking

the line Phil went with. "Any shred of economic credibility which Labour had left has now been buried by Jeremy Corbyn and his acolytes," he intoned. The only strong and stable option was "Theresa May and her

Come come, chancellor. Surely you C-word? It's Theresa May and her team. chief's memo banning Theresa May And "Conservative", though I suppose he



comes on, and instead of Sonny and Cher's I Got You Babe - as in the movie it's "strong and stable". Having been stuck in Groundhog May

and how we use our spell on this Earth. Like: are there even consequences to vasser? Dropped a toaster in the bath? Learned to play the piano? Created ice to tag along today, it's hard to escape the notion that there's a lot of I in Theresa sculptures? Would I still wake up with 'strong and stable" on my radio?

cYanmaGentaYellowblack

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ing the cycle.

or now, we're all still trapped in the loop. Strong and stable. Coalition of (during the privately esnership). The only thing equivalent of an obscene joke about

What was their tax philosophy, May shut it down by spluttering that difference in Groundhog May?

Whisky talking Johnson given mouthful after temple ode to booze making elderly

Rajeev Syal

Boris Johnson has apologised after outraging a worshipper in a Sikh temple by enthusing about a boost in the whisky trade, apparently unaware that alcohol is forbidden under some Sikh teachings.

The foreign secretary, widely seen to have been sidelined during the election campaign over his propensity for gaffes, was visiting a Sikh temple in Bristol when he spoke about ending tariffs on whisky traded between the UK and India.

In a BBC recording of the event, a female worshipper can be heard asking: "How dare you talk about alcohol in a Sikh temple?" After the unidentified woman also told him about alcoholism in her family, he apologised several times.

The former London mayor, seen by some as a liability, was filmed wearing a bright orange turban (right) before arguing for a free trade deal with India.

bidden under some Sikh teachings, he told the crowd he was going to sign a free trade deal in order to boost the trade in whisky. "I hope I'm not embarrassing anybody here by saying that when we go to India we have to bring 'clinky' in our luggage,"

There is a duty of 150% in India on imports of Scottish whisky. So we have to bring it in for our relatives duty-free.

trade deal with India, which there will be, because then the tariffs would go." His words provoked an angry response

from the crowd, with one women - named as Balbir Kaur - particularly vocal. "How dare you talk about alcohol in a Sikh temple?" she asked. "You are stand-

DERSHIP

FEREST

'How dare you talk about alcohol Johnson replied: "I'm very sorry if you

"There are plenty of Sikhs who are good and practising Sikhs who don't take your

siderations that whisky is a huge business

Bhai Narinderjit Singh of the Sikh Federation said "no politician in his right mind would speak in a gurdwara [Sikh temple] about a trade deal involving alcohol. It is a requirement that Sikhs should not consume any intoxicants. Anyone who has consumed alcohol or has tobacco on them

Singh said Johnson should know better

Analysis Points to watch in Tory manifesto

Alan Travis

Theresa May said yesterday that her manifesto would set out how she intended to take the "tough decisions" needed to tackle the "five great challenges our country faces" during the next five years. She did not spell out what these challenges were, but it led some commentators to recall William Beveridge's 20th century campaign to tackle the "five giant evils" of "want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness". May's manifesto is unlikely to match those ambitions, but these five areas could shape her premiership.

May will be reluctant to spell out her negotiating strategy in detail. But the manifesto does perform one important constitutional function in that a clear commitment at this stage means the House of Lords cannot persistently block any pledge endorsed by the electorate. David Cameron wanted not only to stay in the single market but to expand it, but the prime minister may now want to secure an electoral endorsement to ensure a hard Brexit is beyond doubt. Watch out for an explicit pledge to leave the EU's single market and the customs union. There will also be a commitment to the "great repeal bill", but beyond that May will not want to lay down any more specific red lines before the negotiations.

May has made clear she has no intention of repeating Cameron's 2015 "tax lock" pledge not to raise income tax, national insurance or VAT. This was subsequently enshrined in law and the initial decision by the chancellor to ignore it in his last budget led to his humiliating U-turn on his proposal to increase national insurance

contributions for the self-employed. May and Philip Hammond both said vesterday that the Conservatives were 'a low tax party" but notably explicitly refused to rule out increasing taxes for higher earners. A higher rate of nheritance tax on estates has also been floated to fund changes in social care. The prime minister also said that a fresh timetable will be set out for eliminating

May has repeatedly made clear that the social care crisis is firmly on her "to do" list but before the launch has given few clues to her preferred solution. She is unlikely to repeat George Osborne's £8bn NHS pledge in 2015, outbidding even Labour's manifesto offer. She is said to regard the NHS as "spendthrift" but has to renew the NHS's five-year plan - which is in year three - amid health service warnings that its modernisation programme is at risk if more money is not forthcoming.

Campaign speculation that the "tens of thousands" net migration target was to be dropped forced a reluctant Downing Street to confirm that the seven-yearold target - net migration now stands at 273,000 - will be renewed in the manifesto today.

But beyond that, interest will centre on any hints of the future shape of UK's policy towards EU migrants when free movement comes to an end after Brexit. There is also expected to be a pledge to restrict the rights of EU nationals to bring non-EU spouses to the UK.

. What's on offer to a working-class kid from Brixton, Birmingham, Bolton or Bradford

This was the title of a 2016 article by May's joint chief of staff, Nick Timothy who was raised in a working-class Birmingham family. He identified the Tories' most serious weakness as "the perception that we simply do not give a toss about ordinary people".

He said that what was needed was an approach that continued to help the very poor and fought injustices based on gender, race and sexuality, but the party also needed to "adopt a relentless focus on governing in the interests of ordinary working people".

He argued that in the past Tory governments had got this right with welfare reform, increasing the minimum wage and the "northern powerhouse" but had lost sight of their interests on energy policy, house building, reducing high immigration, tax credits, protecting pensioner benefits, and the

profile of spending cuts. Look out for evidence of this bigger vision of what might be called Mayism in the manifesto.

ITV debate 'Invitation open' to May and Corbyn

The Conservatives and Labour will send spin doctors to tonight's televised leaders' debate despite a refusal by Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn to take part. Advisers to the two main parties will apparently brief the media after the two-hour election campaign special involving the leaders of the SNP, the Liberal Democrats, Ukip, Plaid said Nicola Sturgeon, Tim Farron, Paul Nuttall, Leanne Wood and Caroline Lucas are expected to attend.

and Corbyn until the debate airs at 8pm. The broadcaster told the parties it would not accept representatives or spokespeople in place of leaders. ITV is not intending to publicly

in the debate remains open to May

"empty chair" Corbyn and May by leaving vacant spaces for the debate, which is being filmed in Salford. "The stage will have the right number of podiums for leaders who attend on the night," said a spokeswoman.

rightwing press, who branded Labour pro-

posals for a levy on estates a "death tax".

could be unpopular with middle-aged

and elderly voters is likely to be taken as a

sign of confidence of winning the election,

given May's double-digit lead in the polls

Strategists also hope it will paint the prime

likely to include proposals on improving

skills and apprenticeships, and a prom-

the Conservative commitment to cutting

immigration to the tens of thousands

ised expansion of workers' rights, which

The document is also likely to retain

Other measures in the manifesto are

minister as a realist and pragmatist.

Her decision to include a measure that

Mark Sweney and Rajeev Syal ITV says that the invitation to appear

ventionist policies, such as her pledge to PM gambles on cap energy costs for households. Previous attempts to reform the funding of social care have met with deep hostility from the

May will hope the measures address

deep concerns about the long-term costs of funding social care, which have been

"the enormous funding gap" in healthcare spending between Britain and other major

May said at a press conference yesterday that the manifesto would seek to address five major challenges in an echo of the social reformer William Beveridge's five "giant evils". The social care announcement is likely to get a mixed reception, as some Conservatives will worry about it going down badly with middle-class voters who want to pass on the value of their homes to their children

ported May's desire to keep the target.

May is already under pressure from Leader comment, page 32 \rightarrow some on the right of her party over inter-

Marina Hyde

We are all trapped in a Tory election time loop - think of it as Groundhog May

o watch Theresa Mav and Philip Hammond conduct a joint press conference is to be made powerfully aware of one thing: their chemistry is deader than Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise's in Eyes Wide Shut. Let's face it, that wasn't just dead; it was at a fairly advanced stage of decomposition. And it's all a bit dental records with Theresa and Phil, too, with the PM declining two opportunities to say she'd be keeping Hammond as her chancellor after the election.

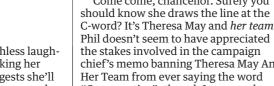
It was an acute awkwardness that will not have escaped Hammond, whose nervous laughter at questions referring to his swearing rows with No 10 and the general breakdown of their relationship was not entirely convincing. "Media tittle-tattle is just that," he insisted, "media tittle-tattle." It's just paper talk,

innit? Even though the mirthless laughter with which May was shaking her head next to him surely suggests she'll be selling him to Watford four seconds after the transfer window opens.

Still, at least Hammond's allowed out in public, unlike, say, the health secretary, Jeremy Hunt, who seems to be regarded as slightly more toxic than a pint of milk left out of the fridge during the Fukushima meltdown. Tory central command knows Hunt couldn't look less reassuring to voters if he did media appearances in a plague doctor mask.

Yes, at least I'm not Jeremy, Phil must have tled the Cost of Corbyn.

been thinking, as he tried to make the best of this Canary Wharf event enti-



mirthlessly. But at least Phil's still allowed in public,

What is the cost of Corbyn? About five | only let it slip three times. A fairly close shave: if you say it five times, Lynton for a phone-in host - though that wasn't Crosby uses his meat hook to write your resignation letter in your blood.

May's team.

hrough Brexit?'

course, no doubt.

for the next 21 days

Indeed, for all that Phil was allowed

"If he can't show real leadership in

is party," she wondered rhetorically of

Corbyn, "how could he lead our country

Fair enough. Though if you couldn't

show enough leadership to even bother

campaigning in the run-up to the refer-

endum, prime minister, then how can

you? Something we shall discover in due

For now, there are no new develop-

ments. None at all. As you will be aware,

the Tories are conducting their election

campaign inside a time loop. Think of

it as Groundhog May. Here she comes -

shadow, it means strong and stable is

going to rain down on you like napalm

You think you're moving on in this

election - there is the temporary impres-

sion of time passing - but you're not.

wrestling with some fairly profound

Every morning you wake and the radio

Punxsutawney Theresa. If she spots her

Conservative team"

for some time now, many of us will be

questions about the nature of time, fate, my actions? What if I punched this can-

Let me be clear: I'd literally be willng to form a romantic attachment to someone who butchers lines as badly as Andie MacDowell does if it meant break-

chaos. Theresa and Phil are now our Sonny and Cher tranged phase of their partthey seem to have left in common is that both treat questions in which they are given an opportunity to say something remotely interesting as the unwelcome their own mothers.

someone wondered today? There was a slightly appalled pause. Eventually, her philosophy was that people should pay low tax. And Hammond thought it was "yesterday's question". Yesterday. Tomorrow. Today. Does it really make a

Seemingly unaware that alcohol is for-

in a Sikh temple?' Sikh worshipper Balbir Kaur

he said. "We have to bring Johnnie Walker. ing in a Sikh temple talking about alcohol which is absolutely not right."

think that alcohol is a bad thing - I under-"Imagine what we could do with a stand your point of view. It is not, though, the view of every religion. attitude. I do think it is relevant to our con-

> in this country and a free trade deal with India would be of great value." Kaur then told Johnson she had relatives who had suffered from alcoholism. Others in the crowd reportedly told him he "wouldn't have got out alive" if he had

made the comments in India. is not allowed to enter a gurdwara."

as his wife, Marina Wheeler, is half Sikh. A spokesman for Johnson denied it was a gaffe, claiming instead that he was sympathising with Kaur's personal situation.

pay their way

continued from page 1

unpaid leave from work to look after a relative for up to a year.

having a knock-on effect on the NHS. Meanwhile doctors' leaders will accuse nisters of a "callous disregard" of the NHS today and putting its funding into "deep freeze". The British Medical Association will call on ministers must plug

European countries.

rather than the hundreds of thousands. That approach was challenged yesterday by a leader in the Evening Standard newspaper, edited by the for mer chancellor George Osborne, which claimed no senior cabinet ministers sup-

Labour has dismissed as spin.

In a leader column, the newspaper said there had been an assumption at the top of the Conservative party that May would "bury the pledge" made by David Cameron before he was elected in 2010 because it was unachievable and undesirable.